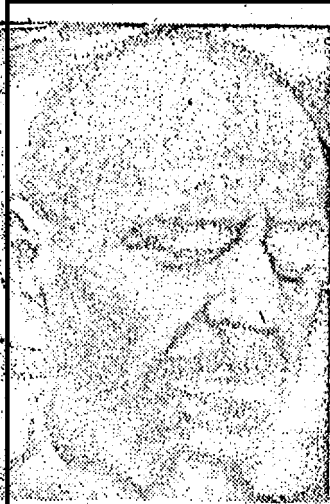


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Greville Wynne

# Why the Russians got hold of Wynne

By Michael Hamlyn

From the time in March, 1961, when Gordon Arnold Lonsdale, the master spy later identified by American intelligence as Conon Trofimovitch Molody, was sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment, the Russians were desperately anxious to secure his release. With this in mind, the whole story of Greville Wynne, his arrest, trial and release last week becomes much clearer.

Wynne, to all outward appearances a cheery buccaneering salesman, with a growing circle of sales contacts behind the Iron Curtain, was in Moscow making arrangements for a Soviet delegation to visit this country. He had met Oleg Penkovsky during an earlier visit in December, 1960, and as Penkovsky was in charge of organising such exchanges, had seen him informally several times.

Two days before Wynne left, and three weeks after sentence had been passed on Lonsdale, their relationship suddenly took on a new turn. On April 12, Penkovsky asked Wynne whether he knew any "important people," and whether he would like to pass a package to them. The trap which was to deliver Wynne to the cells of the Lubianka prison was set.

In November, 1960, he had gone so far as to approach the American authorities offering to spy for them, but the offer was ignored. Penkovsky was assumed by the Americans to be an agent provocateur.

Why did he pick on Wynne? The Russian was due to visit this country a week later, where he could have made a more direct approach, to the British authorities if he had wished.

However, at his trial held last May, Penkovsky said: "I knew Wynne was an agent." Soviet Intelligence, it seemed thought that Wynne was already passing back information to the British authorities.

Whitehall has regularly denied that Wynne had any connection at all with our spying network and maintains the same to this day, despite his own statements in court. But to the Russians Wynne was certainly not the innocent businessman he appeared, and would be useful material for a spy-for-spy exchange along the lines of the recent Abel-Powers swap (see Page 15).

Even before Wynne was brought to open trial, the Russians began to make suggestions, obliquely, that he should be exchanged for Lonsdale.

Continued on Page 3, Col. 3

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## Russia's plot to win Lonsdale

Continued from Page 1

Rumours were deliberately fed to selected British correspondents in Moscow. After the Wynne trial ended the trickle of rumours became a deluge and throughout the following months the Russians made a series of indirect approaches to the British authorities asking for an exchange.

One request came through lawyers connected with Wynne's trial. Another came through a mysterious lawyer from Warsaw, first mentioned in the "Sunday Express" in July last year, and again by the "Daily Express" last week.

Whitehall ignored these deafening whispers. So far as Britain was concerned Wynne was not a spy, and to agree to an exchange would appear to admit that he was. Before an exchange could be contemplated, some motive other than the desire to see Lonsdale was arrested with some material which might still be of value to the Russians, and his is

seems clear that they were deliberately piling up the pressure for his release. Wynne was being deliberately run-down to obtain precisely this effect. The idea worked.

Mrs Wynne was visibly shocked as she came away from this meeting. She was crying. On her return to this country she wrote a letter of poignant appeal direct to the Prime Minister imploring him to arrange for her husband's release. But Mrs Wynne's word alone was not sufficient to make the Government act. Confirmation was needed.

By a convenient coincidence, shortly after Mrs Wynne's letter was received, independent confirmation of Wynne's condition did come from another source. An American, who had been held in the same prison as Wynne at Vladimir, 100 miles or so from Moscow, was released. As he was on his way to the Foreign Office not only that Wynne was ill, but that he was likely to die if left much longer.

Russian sources. Was this in fact their policy? The Russians said yes it was. From then on the only thing that needed settling was the time and the place.

Even now the course of events did not run smoothly. By April 1, the "Daily Express"—which had been one of the main sources for earlier rumours of exchange plans—caught wind of the new negotiations. Again a Warsaw lawyer was mentioned.

The Russians meanwhile were using their normal negotiating tricks and, as Ivan Shishkin had done when negotiating with James Donovan over the Abel-Powers exchange, they suddenly went cold, and appeared to lose all enthusiasm.

The "Express" was urgently warned not to do anything that might upset the negotiations. They were persuaded to keep the story out of print.

In the days when the Russians wanted up again, and the agreement was satisfactorily concluded on April 7.